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July 30, 2010

Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Second Draft Interim Delta Plan

Dear Council Members:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Second Draft Interim Delta Plan (IDP). These earlier comments stress the importance of effective integration of existing State and Federal plans with local governmental entities.

The current IDP points to risks to people, property and infrastructure. The current system of handling levee failures and other emergency situations must receive a higher level of focus to ensure Delta communities are ready to respond to high water and high wind events and other emergencies. There should be an integrated plan that connects the State with local agencies in a way that is established, effectively coordinated and tested regularly (at least annually).

One of the complexities of governing the Delta is a lack of stable financing. The Council must make a compelling case that identifies what is genuinely necessary to both address problems with the Delta's fisheries and requirements for ensuring reliable water quality and supply that are balanced in a way to ensure Delta communities are sustainable. If the Delta is improperly managed, 25 million Californians and numerous aquatic and terrestrial species who depend on the Delta for water and many others who benefit from its agricultural production risk losing this amazing resource. What would it cost to replace this resource? The true needs of the Delta must be accurately quantified, prioritized and broadly communicated.

In Section III, Interim Plan Processes, specifically engaging and establishing working relationships with agencies, 85306 recommends State investments in levee operation, maintenance, and improvements in the Delta. Solano County encourages the Stewardship Council to note the following regarding levees:

1.
 - a. Recognize and support the integrated and co-dependant levee system that exists throughout the Delta—they are an integrated system that, especially on highly subsidized islands, maintains the displacement that preserves the water quality and ecosystems that all California requires.
 - b. Recognize that different levels of flood protection and levee structural integrity are appropriate for different land uses.

- c. Provide necessary levels of flood protection for legacy communities to allow those communities to have economic sustainability with reasonable growth in light of the restrictive aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program.
 - d. Develop and implement integrated flood planning, response and recovery programs with appropriate partnerships, funding streams, and regulatory reform to ensure appropriate and coordinated emergency response.
- 2. Develop sustainable and broad-based funding mechanisms to support flood protection activities in the Delta.
 - a. Preserve the Delta Levee Maintenance Program (CWC §12980-12995).
 - b. Fund the state subventions program at higher levels (with a multi-year funding commitment) by expediting the process for reimbursement. Voter-approved funding exists to accomplish this through release of Prop 84 and 1E funds.
 - c. Develop state and local general fund and specialized sources of funding for flood protection; preserve and maximize Federal investment.
 - d. The *CALFED* Levee Stability Improvement Program is an avenue for federal financial aid for levee rehabilitation projects. Active, ongoing support of this Corps program is requested. The Corps has a Delta-wide list of projects and has begun implementing the first few projects this year. Active advocacy for continued funding of this project is important.
 - e. Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches by adopting standards and funding for O & M that allow local managers an opportunity to prioritize the use of funds based on their expertise and knowledge of the deficiencies that create the greatest risks.
- 3. Recognize the multiple benefits provided by flood control facilities and activities in the Delta, including recognition that flood protection infrastructure is necessary to achieve many other societal goals such as transportation, environmental restoration, water supply, health and safety and local economic activity.
 - a. Promote and incentivize flood protection benefits as part of environmental enhancement, water supply, recreation and other projects in the Delta.
- 4. In relation to levees, ongoing pre-placement of emergency rock stockpiles for levee repair is vital. Where stockpiles exist to block waterways, there are no corresponding piles for levee breaches and there should be. This is important because if a levee break occurs, prompt repair of the breach with available materials may prevent a larger scale problem from occurring.

Solano County encourages the Council to incorporate a strong public process into the IDP that includes regular press releases to notify a larger group of stakeholders about Delta issues. It is important for people to understand what the proposed changes will mean for them.

Delta Stewardship Council
Second Draft of the Interim Delta Plan
July 30, 2010

We look forward to working with you on the development of the IDP and other programs that will impact the Delta. If you or your staff has any questions concerning these issues, please contact Kathy Barnes-Jones, Delta Water Program Analyst, at 707-784-7914.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Vasquez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John M. Vasquez, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Solano County Legislative Delegation
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Delta Counties Coalition